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¶ South Vietnam: The Communists stepped up the pace of their military actions on 10-11 February, shelling several urban centers and allied bases from Da Nang southward to the Mekong Delta.

At least four provincial capitals were taken under enemy rocket and mortar fire, with the city of Cheo Reo in the central highlands hardest hit. Although the action at Cheo Reo, which also included limited ground probes, was directed largely against government headquarters installations within the city, it nonetheless resulted in fairly sizable casualties--24 killed, 33 wounded--to both South Vietnamese civilian and military personnel.

The allied air base at Da Nang along with a network of infantry and artillery bases northwest of Saigon in Tay Ninh Province were among the more significant military objectives struck by the Communists. These attacks may be followed by an increase in enemy activity prior to and possibly during the Tet holiday period (17-19 February) [redacted]

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The Communists have set the propaganda stage to justify whatever military action they may have in mind for Tet. A Liberation Radio broadcast of 10 February threatened Communist military retaliation in response to any allied "violations" of the Front's seven-day cease-fire (15-22 February). The broadcast said that the Communists would strike wherever the "violation occurs, in an urban area or in a liberated area." The Communists used a similar line to explain away their Tet offensive of 1968. [redacted] (Map)]

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USSR - West Germany: A recent Soviet note to West Germany on the nonproliferation treaty has improved the chances that Bonn will sign the treaty.

The note, which Soviet Ambassador Tsarapkin delivered to Foreign Minister Brandt on 7 February, spelled out Soviet understanding of Germany's rights under the treaty. [The two met again yesterday, presumably for further discussion on the subject.] The note made no reference to articles 53 and 107 of the UN Charter--the "enemy states" articles--which Moscow has claimed give it the right to intervene to prevent a revival of Nazism in West Germany. It does, however, refer to a Security Council resolution that holds out the prospect of Council protection for states under nuclear attack or the threat of attack, and implicitly recognizes West Germany's right to participate in collective security arrangements. Thus it meets Bonn's wishes to some extent.

Initial West German comment has been favorable. A high-level West German diplomat observed that, while the Soviet statement does not resolve the problem, it does represent an important effort on Moscow's part to facilitate Bonn's signature. Chancellor Kiesinger's intentions are not yet known, but this development, along with the impetus that presumably will be provided by US actions, may clear the way for Germany's signature before next fall's general election campaign warms up.

Tsarapkin said he was not linking Soviet movement on the treaty with other issues, but that if Bonn were to reconsider its stand on holding its presidential election in Berlin, relations between the two countries would be improved. [redacted]

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Italy: The leadership of the Italian Communist Party has made clear that it will maintain its position on the Czechoslovak situation but will avoid giving fresh offense to Moscow.

Secretary General Longo, in his opening address to the party congress, reaffirmed the party's stand of "dissent and disapproval" on Czechoslovakia, and insisted on full respect for the "autonomy and sovereignty of every Communist party and Socialist state." He asked full support for the Czechoslovak leadership, and while calling for a neutral Italy outside NATO, indicated that this should occur within the context of a European security settlement.

Longo had cautiously favorable words for the Moscow conference of Communist parties scheduled for next May, thus confirming recent statements of intention to participate.

The speech seems to have displeased both hard- and soft-liners among delegations from Eastern Europe. Later the chief Soviet delegate defended his government's action in Czechoslovakia, but quickly passed on to less controversial subjects.

This reaction accords with the handling of Longo's speech in the Soviet press, which has featured his comments on the Communist conference, but has all but ignored his remarks on Czechoslovakia. Moscow, nevertheless, must certainly be unhappy over the Italians' performance, which demonstrated again how difficult the Czechoslovak issue is to bury.

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Finland-USSR: Reaction in Finland to Pravda's criticism of alleged Finnish right-wing efforts to undermine relations with the Soviet Union has been remarkably low key.

In a recent article signed "Observer," usually indicative of an authoritative source, Pravda asserted that flourishing Finnish-Soviet economic relations were a vital component of friendship between the two nations. Pravda alleged that arguments in the Finnish Parliament and press against the purchase of Soviet electric locomotives were inspired by "extreme right-wing circles closely connected with Western monopoly capital." These arguments, Pravda alleged, had also stimulated the re-emergence of right-wing elements in such groups as the Social Democratic Party, even though the party was pledged to advance the cause of Finnish-Soviet friendship.

The reason for the Soviet press attack is unclear, although such a practice has been used as a means to soften up small West European countries. The Finns decided in December after long public debate to suspend a five-year-old parliamentary resolution calling for the purchase of domestically built locomotives. Parliament instead gave the government a free hand to purchase Soviet locomotives, with the phrase "if economically justified" thrown in as a sop to the opposition.

Some interpretations of the article foresee a period of strained relations between Finnish Social Democrats and the USSR. Others view the article as an admonition to Finnish Communists to cease their internal squabbling and instead advance the cause of closer Finnish-Soviet relations. Prime Minister Koivisto, however, believes that it is concerned with the future development of Finnish-Soviet trade in connection with Finnish plans for participation in the Nordic Economic Union (Nordec) and he commented that Soviet attitudes would be plumbbed before any final decisions were made.

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Discussions on Nordec probably will be high on the Finnish foreign minister's agenda when he starts a one-week official visit to Moscow on 17 February. The Soviets will presumably make their views known at that time. [redacted]

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Greece: The chances for any speedy resumption of political activity in Athens seem slight, and the military government's control remains unchallenged.

Premier Papadopoulos recently told foreign newsmen that the time is not yet ripe for relaxation of political restrictions, and he could not forecast when new political parties would be allowed to form. Moreover, he said, when such conditions do arise, the multiplicity of parties which characterized Greek politics before the military takeover of April 1967 will not be permitted; the people must become oriented toward a system with only two or three parties. Although confident that his government could win any early election, Papadopoulos said quick elections would risk a return to the situation which existed prior to April 1967 because "some weaknesses in the Greek mentality" persist.

Although Papadopoulos' opinion of his government's popularity with the electorate may be questionable, no alternative to military rule is emerging. The slow progress of the "revolution"--Papadopoulos recently told a US official that his program is six months behind schedule--irks the ex-politicians, but has produced no real reaction from the populace who apparently are still uncommitted. The loudest criticism still comes from West European quarters which continue to question whether Greece will ever return to representative government.

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Dominican Republic: Elements of the extreme left appear increasingly willing to engage in political assassinations and risk military reprisals in order to create a favorable atmosphere for violent agitation.

The slaying of an army captain in early November was quickly followed by a joint army/police raid on a labor union headquarters in the vicinity of the murder. The Communist Dominican Popular Movement (MPD) publicly claimed credit in December for killing a former Trujillo henchman, and last week it announced regret over the failure of its attempt to assassinate a police captain. Possibly in response to the leftist violence, a suspected Communist was slain on 7 February by unknown assailants.

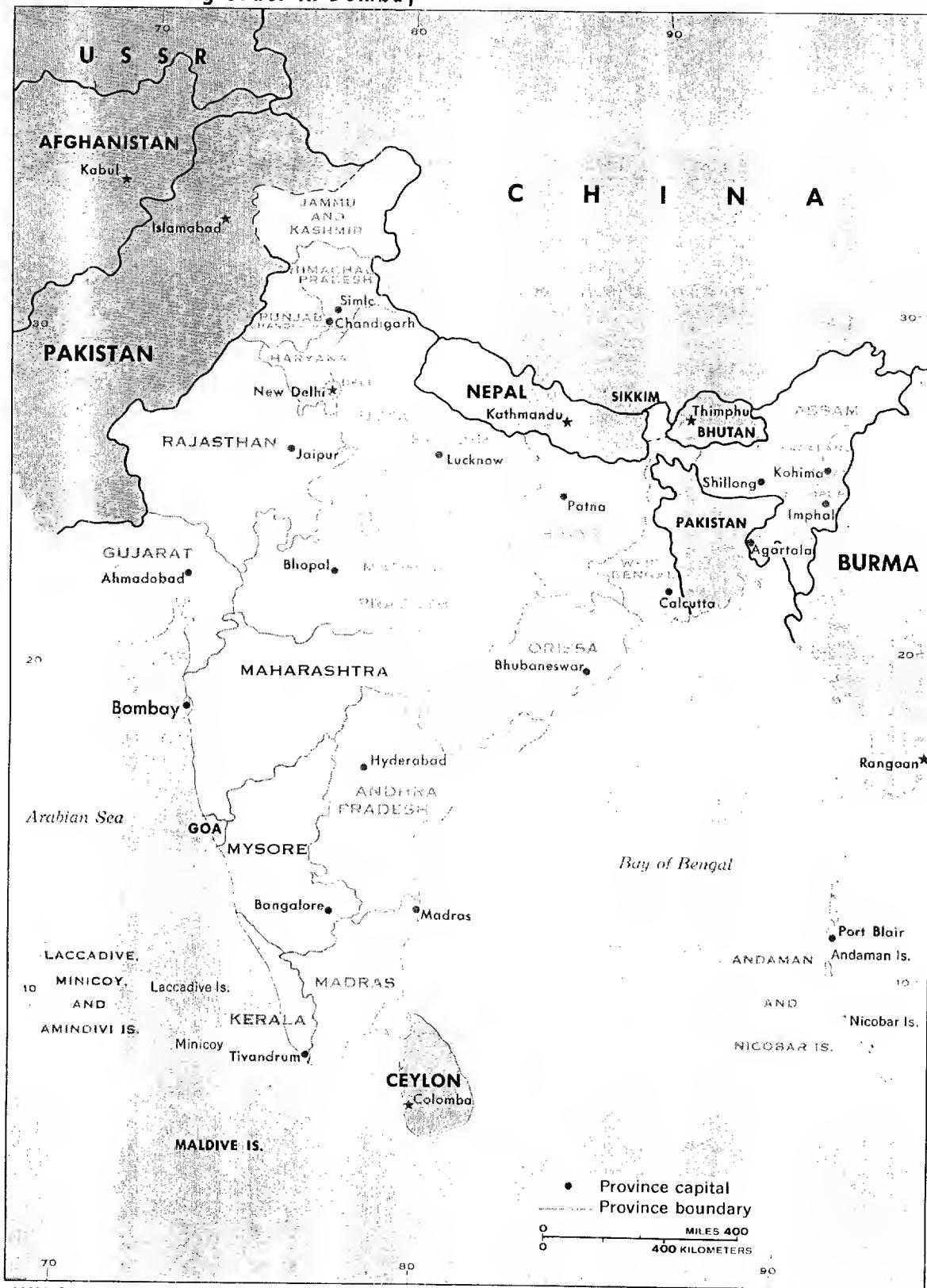
The MPD, like all of the Communist left, has lost ground since 1965 as the security forces have disrupted its activities and the movement has splintered. Its stated intention to conduct further assassinations is probably designed to stir additional extremist opposition against the government. Its actions may also provoke indiscriminate retaliation from the armed forces that could alienate the moderate left from the military-backed government. [redacted]

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Police Restoring Order in Bombay



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India: Police appear gradually to be restoring order in Bombay after three days of serious rioting, although new outbreaks could occur.

The disturbances were sparked by the Shiv Sena, one of the local chauvinistic movements that have proliferated in India over the last two years. The trouble began when Shiv Sena followers, protesting the central government's failure to settle a long-standing border dispute between Maharashtra state and neighboring Mysore, tried to block the entry of Deputy Prime Minister Desai into the city. Lower class Maharashtrians, with Shiv Sena encouragement, then began turning on the economically more advanced south Indians of Bombay, and other antisocial elements joined in the looting and destruction. At least one Hindu-Muslim clash was also reported.

A curfew has been imposed on the city and additional police have been brought in from neighboring states. Army units reportedly are on standby alert and could be rapidly deployed if necessary.

The Shiv Sena had experienced a rapid rise in Bombay, but recently has been on the decline. It retains, however, a nuisance value in the city. Largely the personal vehicle of its fiery and unstable leader, Bal Thackeray, the party champions the cause of native Maharashtrians--the largest and one of the poorest of the many minority groups in cosmopolitan Bombay. [REDACTED] (Map)

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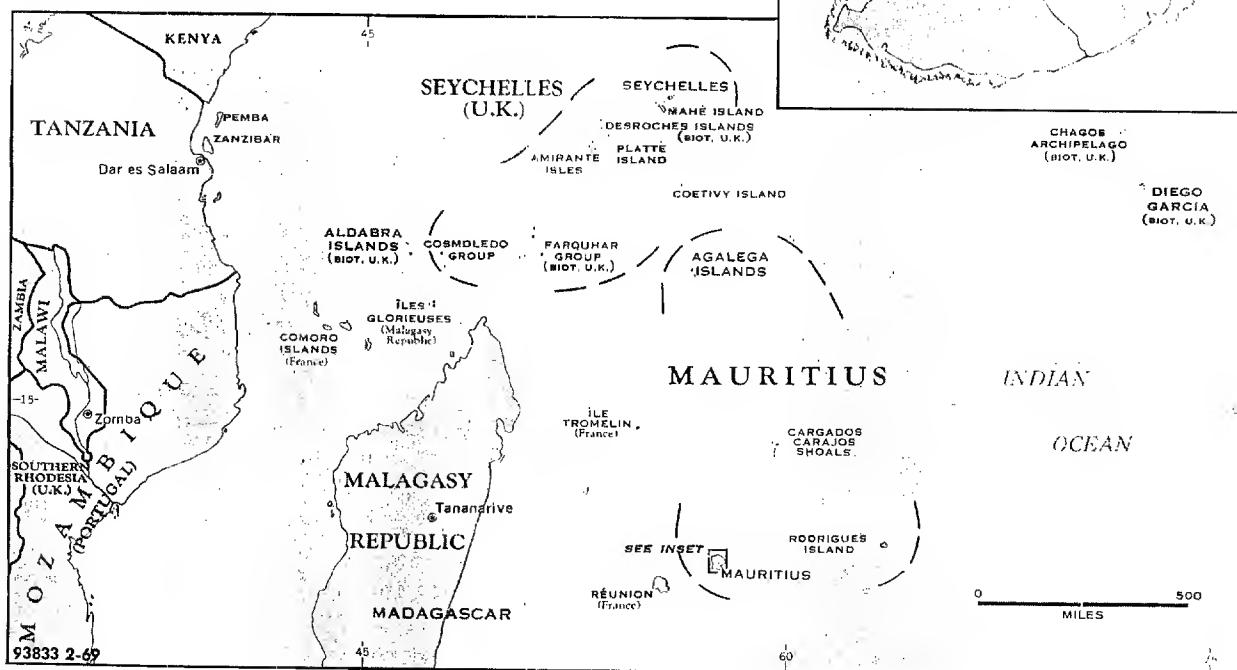
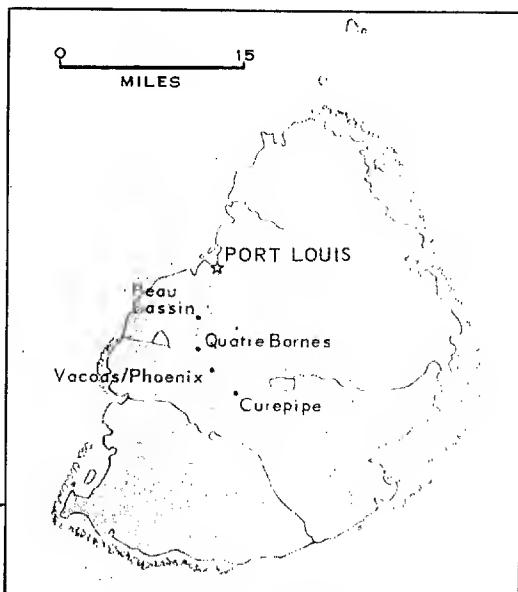
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MAURITIUS AND DEPENDENCIES

COMPARATIVE DATA

	Area	Population (est.)
Mauritius	720 sq. mi.	800,000
Oahu, Hawaii	598 sq. mi.	500,000



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Mauritius: Preparations for municipal elections may bring greater unrest over the next few weeks.

Elections for municipal councils are scheduled for 30 March, and the communal-oriented political parties are already maneuvering for support. The Creole-dominated Mauritian Social Democratic Party (PMSD) controls four of the five municipal councils, but there are reports that the PMSD has lost strength. PMSD leader Gaetan Duval has charged that the Independence Party, a coalition of Hindu and Muslim groups which controls the national government, instigated a dock workers strike to gain support among the normally pro-PMSD Creole workers. He also charged that the Independence Party is sending agents to stir up trouble between Muslims and Creoles.

Over the past several weeks there has been a slight increase in violent incidents of a communal nature. Vandalism against a mosque brought inflammatory statements and pamphlets from Muslim extremists. The government banned the meetings of these Muslims, seized their pamphlets, and arrested their leaders.

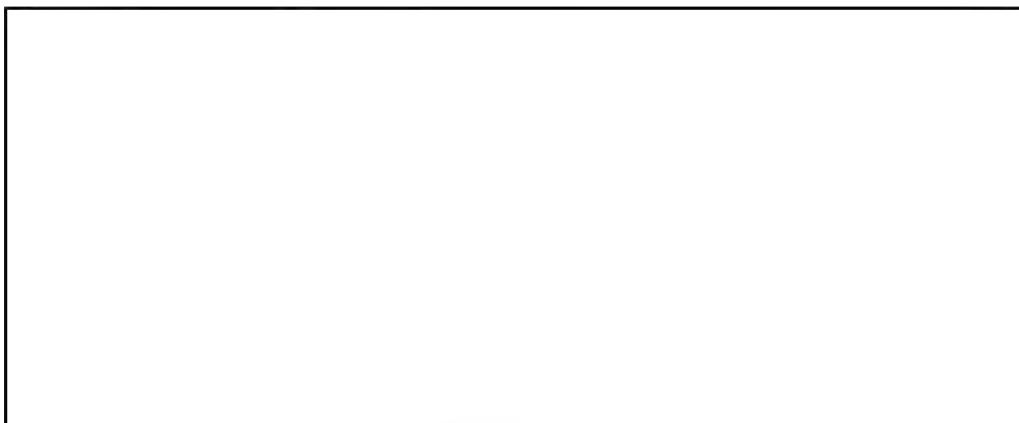
Mauritius, independent since last March, has a history of racial violence. British troops were required to quell fighting between Muslim and Creole gangs in January 1968. The Mauritian security forces have received additional training and personnel, however, and are believed capable of handling most incidents. [REDACTED] (Map)

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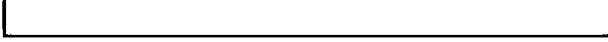
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Yugoslavia - Communist China: The expected arrival of an official Yugoslav trade delegation in Peking at the end of February will mark the highest level trade talks between the two countries in a decade. The renewal of direct negotiations is not likely to have any immediate economic significance and probably will not create much discomfort in the USSR. It could, however, be interpreted to mean that Belgrade and Peking may be willing to submerge their differences in reaction to Moscow's domineering tactics. Belgrade wants to demonstrate its sovereignty by maintaining correct relations with all Communist countries, and the Chinese apparently are willing to cooperate.



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Chile: Clashes last weekend between squatters and national police resulted in many injuries when the squatters, claiming the Housing Ministry had not delivered on a promise of land as part of a self-help program, twice invaded public lands in a low-income suburb of Santiago. A Socialist candidate for the congressional elections on 2 March played a prominent role in the first invasion, and two leading Communist candidates later led squatters into the same area. The opposition is likely to continue such tactics in an effort to put the government in an unfavorable light prior to the elections.

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